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NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
NPS/CHS Word Processor Format  
(Approved 03/88)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUN 28 1989

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: Westcliff School

other names/site number: Old Westcliffe School House 5CR.29

**2. Location**

street & number: 304 4th Street

(NA) not for publication

city, town: Westcliffe

(NA) vicinity

state: Colorado

code: CO

county: Custer

code:027 zip code: 81252

**3. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

**Category of Property**

**No. of Resources within Property**

( ) private

(x) building(s)

contributing

noncontributing

(x) public-local

( ) district

3

buildings

( ) public-State

( ) site

sites

( ) public-Federal

( ) structure

structures

( ) object

objects

3

0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

No. of contributing resources

N/A

previously listed in the

National Register 0

#### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x) nomination ( ) request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (x) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( ) See continuation sheet.

Barbara Sudler  
Signature of certifying official

6-15-89  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

#### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the  
National Register

☒ entered in the National Register.  
( ) See continuation sheet

Alouise Byan

7/27/89

( ) determined eligible for the National Register. ( ) See continuation sheet

( ) determined not eligible for the National Register.

( ) removed from the National Register.

( ) other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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## 6. Functions or Use

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### Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION / School

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### Current Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE / Museum

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular Masonry,  
Front Gabled

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### Materials

(enter categories from instructions)

foundations Stone

walls Stone; wood

roof Wood Shingle

other

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The historic Westcliff Schoolhouse is the only building in Westcliffe of the design which is locally known as the Cottage style, a variety of front gabled vernacular masonry. The schoolhouse faces east on 4th Street, and is situated next to the city park. The landscape is informal with mature trees growing close to the building on the south side. Two outhouses are in the back and a wooden fence encloses the front yard. Three flag poles are in the front of the school where on special occasions, the American flag, Colorado State flag and the Centennial flag are flown. Westcliffe is located in the Wet Mountain Valley, west of Pueblo. Originally founded in the late 1800s as a mining community, it has become a ranching community and is distinctly rural in character.

The structure is one story however the roof is constructed so that a second floor could be added inside. The building plan is rectangular with a symmetrical facade. The school is constructed of field stone and dark stone quoins accent all four corners of the school. Above the wood frame vestibule, in front, are the name of the school and date of construction. On the roof there is a wooden bell tower with a gabled roof set back from the main facade. The original bell in the tower is rung from inside the school. The main entrance in the vestibule has double doors and plain molding.

The shake shingle roof is a decked gable (flat-topped gable) which known as a "Cottage Roof."<sup>1</sup> The gable ends are faced with fishscale shingles.

<sup>1</sup> Cyril M. Harris, Dictionary of Architecture and Construction, McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1975, p. 132.

(x) See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7

Page 2

Westcliff School

Wrought iron cresting once accented the deck, but it was removed during the 2nd World War for the scrap iron. The double hung windows have segmental arches with brick voussoirs. The panes were originally four over four but over the years, some windows have been broken out and replaced with fixed panes. The window surrounds are plain with wooden sills. The rear entrance was once enclosed by a vestibule; the coat room has been removed and the plain back door is exposed.

The school has 1200 square feet of main floor. The floors are wide board hardwood, and the walls have narrow painted board wainscot. The walls above the wainscot and on the ceiling are plastered and painted. In the front part of the building, historical exhibits from Custer County were put up in the Centennial year 1987 and have remained up to be added to as material becomes available. Part of the exhibit is a one room school containing desks and old books, student papers, etc.. from the years when the school house was in existence. In the back part of the building to the west, there is a Teen and Community Center which is sponsored by the Valley Park, Recreation and Youth Center Inc. A pool table, benches, kitchen and restrooms have been added. The schoolhouse still retains much of its original integrity of design, materials, setting, feeling and association.

Behind the school are two identical wood frame outhouses which are contributing. The exact date of construction is not known, but they are believed to have been constructed prior to 1939 as evidenced by their design and materials. They are rectangular in plan with gabled roofs faced in wood shingles. The rafter ends are exposed which is characteristic of the teens and 1920s construction. Also typical of that period is the rabbeted style of the wood siding which covers the exteriors of both outhouses. In the center of the front is a plain board door with two small rectangular openings at the top. These are contributing buildings.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:      ☐ nationally      ☐ statewide      ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria      ☐ A   ☐ B   ☒ C   ☐ D  
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)      ☐ A   ☐ B   ☐ C   ☐ D   ☐ E   ☐ F   ☐ G

### Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

1891

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Significant Person

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Schere, Archie - Builder

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Westcliff Schoolhouse meets National Register Criterion C because it is significant for its design as a 19th century building type and for its materials and method of construction. Not only is the school the only example of Cottage style in Westcliffe but the material is unusual for a school house. The building, built of local fieldstone, is a testimony to the expertise of its stone mason, Archie Scherer. Mr. Scherer worked on several other buildings in Westcliffe, including the City Jail.<sup>1</sup>

The schoolhouse is an important part of the community's history many of the town people still living in the area attended this school. The building was built for the town of Westcliffe as part of the one room school system of Custer County, and was used as such until the school system of Custer County began consolidation in 1948. The school was used for grades 1-3 until December 1953 when the consolidation was completed. Several of the retired teachers are still in the area.

The Westcliff School, built in 1891, stands as a memory of the past and a tribute to the one room schoolhouse. The school name, spelled Westcliff, as opposed to town of Westcliffe, and date of construction appear above the front door.

<sup>1</sup>This information was verified by Marie Erps, a niece of Archie Scherer who is now living in the town of Silver Cliff, Colorado.

(x) See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8

Page 2

Westcliff School

Westcliffe, the county seat of Custer County, is situated in the western part of the county. Most of the retail business is on Main Street in Westcliffe. The county has no population center. It is two-thirds the size of Rhode Island, its population is over 2,000. Many of the people live on ranches that play an important role of the economy, as does recreation and summer residence.

The settling of the Wet Mountain Valley came when a colony of Germans came from Chicago to begin a new life of farming. The search for minerals in the Rosita, Querida, and Silver Cliff areas brought several thousands of prospectors. The founding of Westcliffe occurred around 1885, after Dr. William A. Bell brought the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad from Canon City in 1881. This railroad line, also known as the Silver Cliff branch or the Grape Creek extension, was built to ship silver ore from the mines in the valley, but it terminated one mile west of the booming mining town of Silver Cliff. It is probable that the line stopped short of the mining town in order to raise the property values and establish a new town on the ranch land owned by Bell. Westcliffe, originally known as Clifton, was renamed by Bell after his English birthplace, Westcliffe-on-the-sea. By 1938 the railroad was no longer in operation, but the land that William Bell had sold around the station had become a town on July 25, 1887.

Even though mining had declined, ranching and agriculture had progressed. Westcliffe became the trading center and center of education for Custer County. Today, modern highways, resorts and a ski area bring tourists to the valley which offers some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in Colorado. The Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range presents unending beauty to those who seek new vistas.

The building has architectural significance because it is the only known school building in Custer County constructed of local field stone. In addition the construction and design by stonemason, Archie Scherer, is notable in several respects. His attention to detail, as demonstrated in the quoins and the randomly placed dark field stones which pepper the schools walls, and his artistic use of local materials make it significant for its method of construction.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Pearl, Michael. "National Register Nomination Form for National Hotel" May 27, 1987.

Oral Interview with Marie Erps, Archie Scherer's niece.

( ) See continuation sheet

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ( ) preliminary determination of individual listing ( 36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ( ) previously listed in the National Register
- ( ) previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ( ) designated a National Historic Landmark
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- ( ) State Historic Preservation Office
- ( ) Other State agency
- ( ) Federal agency
- ( ) Local government
- ( ) University
- ( ) Other

Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of property: Less than one acre

### UTM References

A 1|3   4|5|9|1|8|0|   4|2|2|0|4|2|0|  
Zone   Easting   Northing

B   |     |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |  |  |  |  |  
Zone   Easting   Northing

C   |     |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |  |  |  |  |  
Zone   Easting   Northing

D   |     |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |  |  |  |  |  
Zone   Easting   Northing

( ) See continuation sheet

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### Verbal Boundary Description

Block 14, Lots 6-15, Town of Westcliffe 2nd filing.

( ) See continuation sheet

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### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the school.

( ) See continuation sheet

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Irene M. Francis

Organization: Valley Park Recreation & Youth Center

Street & Number: 2301 CR 323

City or Town: Westcliffe

Date: March, 1989

Telephone: (719) 783-9453

State: CO Zip Code: 81252

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1

Photo Log

Westcliff School

Photo Log

Westcliff Schoolhouse

304 4th Street

Westcliffe, Colorado

Photos: Irene Francis, Westcliffe

Date: February, 1989

Negatives: Irene Francis

Photo #

1. E front, view W
2. S side, view N
3. W rear, view E
4. Classroom interior
5. One of two outhouses, E front, view W

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Westcliff School  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: COLORADO, Custer

DATE RECEIVED: 6/28/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/11/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/27/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/12/89  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000999

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 7/27/89 DATE

Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



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CLASSIFICATION

\_\_\_count      \_\_\_resource type

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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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FUNCTION

\_\_\_historic      \_\_\_current

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DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_architectural classification  
\_\_\_materials  
\_\_\_descriptive text

---

SIGNIFICANCE

Period      Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

\_\_\_summary paragraph  
\_\_\_completeness  
\_\_\_clarity  
\_\_\_applicable criteria  
\_\_\_justification of areas checked  
\_\_\_relating significance to the resource  
\_\_\_context  
\_\_\_relationship of integrity to significance  
\_\_\_justification of exception  
\_\_\_other

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

\_\_\_acreage      \_\_\_verbal boundary description  
\_\_\_UTMs      \_\_\_boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

\_\_\_sketch maps    \_\_\_USGS maps    \_\_\_photographs    \_\_\_presentation

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OTHER COMMENTS

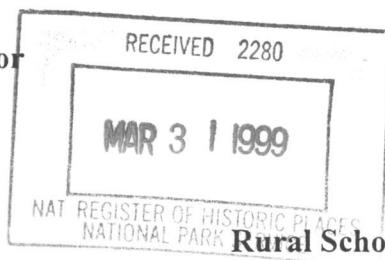
Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet



Westcliff School  
Custer County, Colorado  
Rural School Buildings in Colorado - MPS

Section Additional Information for NRIS #890009999

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This property meets the registration requirements of the schoolhouse property type as outlined in the **Rural School Buildings in Colorado** Multiple Property Documentation Form.



Westeliff School  
Westcliffe Colorado

Photo # 1



Photo # 2

Westcliff School  
Westcliffe, Colorado





Photo #3

Westcliff School

Westcliffe, Colorado



INSIDE front  
Westcliff School  
Westcliffe, Colorado  
Photo #41

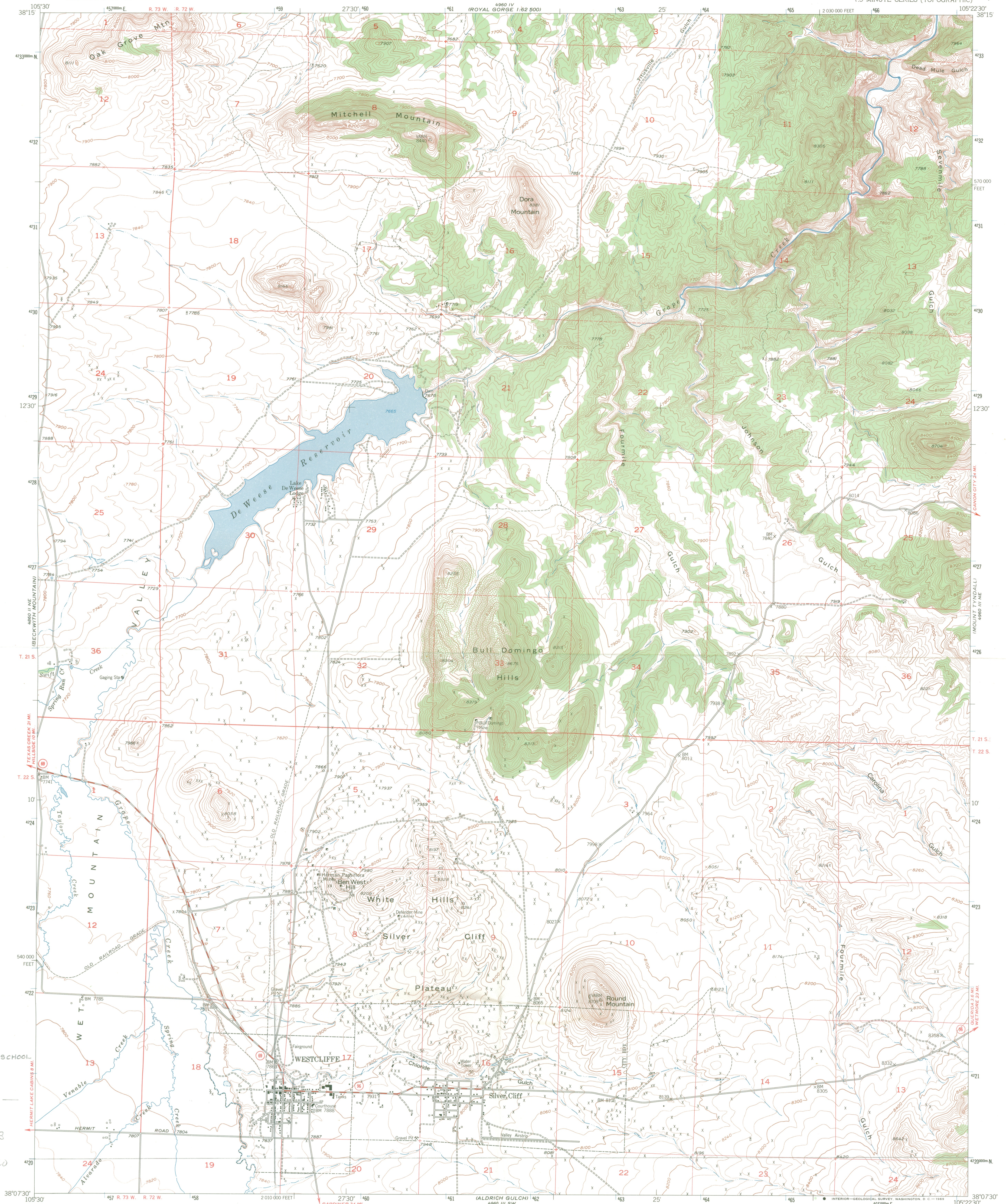


Westcliff School  
outhouse

westcliffe, Colo.

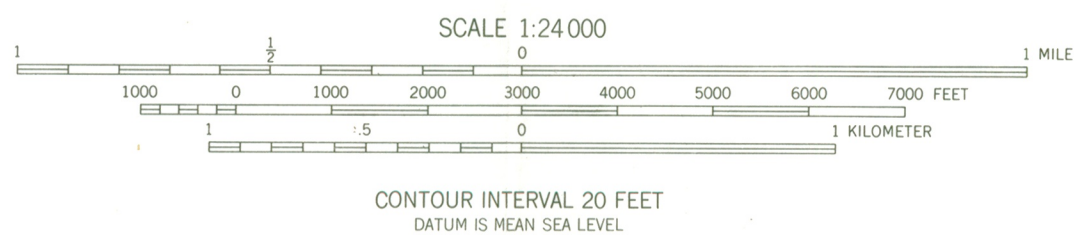
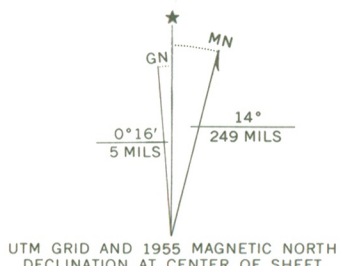
Photo # 5





WESTCLIFF SCHOOL  
SCR. 29  
13459180  
4220426  
Map # 1 of 3  
Custer Co. CO

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods  
Aerial photographs taken 1952. Field check 1955  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Colorado coordinate system,  
south zone  
Dashed land lines indicate approximate locations  
All mines are inactive unless otherwise indicated  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 13, shown in blue



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Medium duty ——— Light duty ———  
Unimproved dirt =====  
State Route



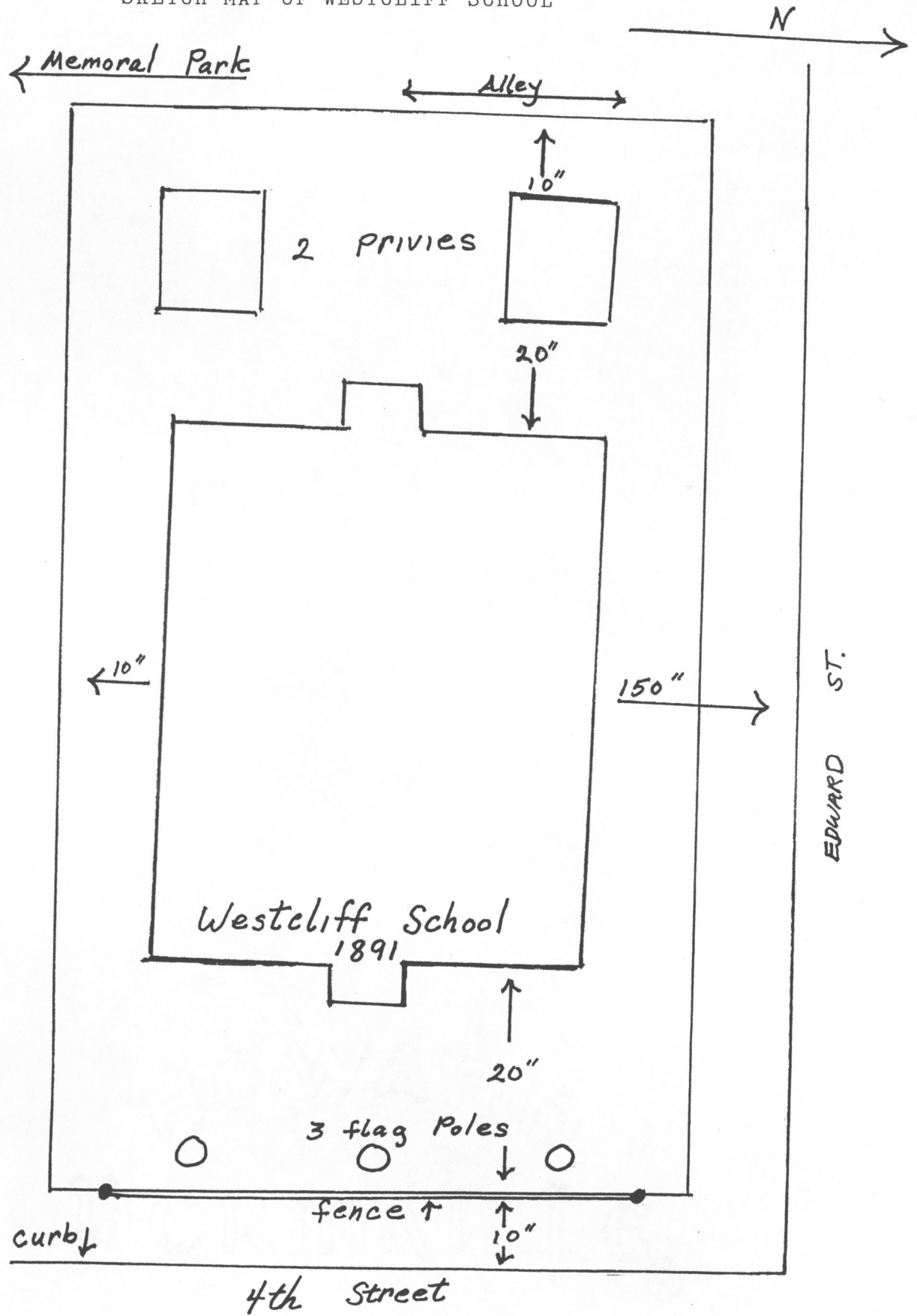
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

WESTCLIFFE, COLO.  
N3807.5—W10522.5/7.5  
1955

AMS 4960 III NW—SERIES V877

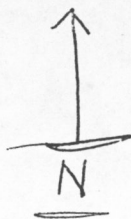
DUPLICATE





Tax Assessor Map

Westcliffe, Colorado

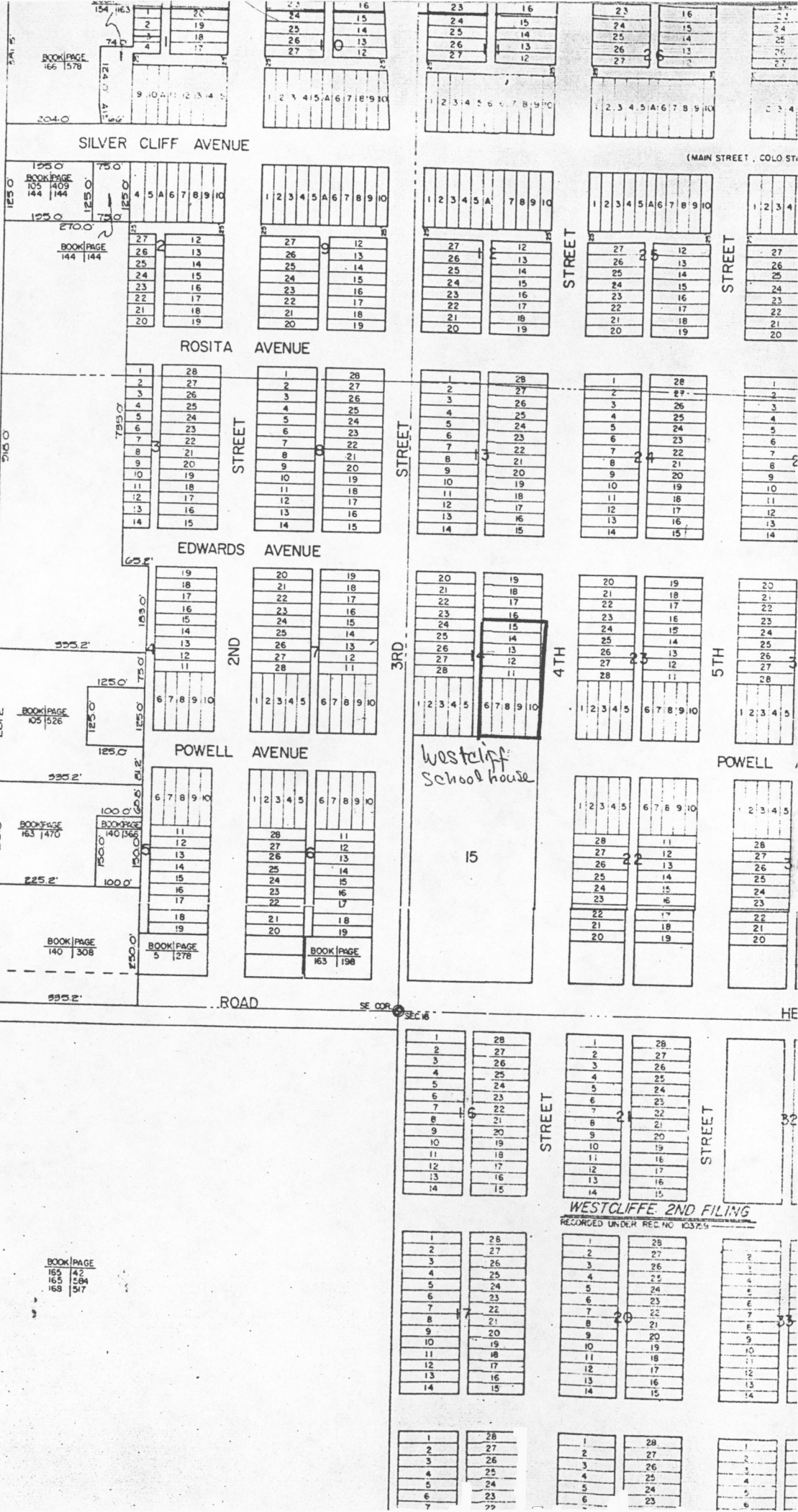


BOOK/PAGE  
166 | 140

NW COR  
SE 1/4 SE 1/4  
SEC 18

BOOK/PAGE  
166 | 140

BOOK/PAGE  
165 | 42  
165 | 284  
168 | 517



WESTCLIFF 2ND FILING  
RECORDED UNDER REC. NO. 10325



COLORADO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

JUN 28 1989

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

The Colorado History Museum 1300 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203-2137

June 14, 1989

Carol D. Shull  
Chief of Registration  
National Register of Historic Places  
Interagency Resources Division  
National Park Service, U. S. Dept. of the Interior  
P. O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to submit to your office the following nominations approved by the Colorado Review Board on May 12, 1989:

Cheyenne County Courthouse, Cheyenne County  
MacGregor Ranch, Larimer County  
Marble Multiple Property Documentation and four individual nominations:

Marble High School, Gunnison County  
Marble Town Hall  
William Parry House  
St. Paul's Church

St. Thomas Theological Seminary, Denver County  
✓ Westcliff School, Custer County

We are also submitting an individual nomination for the Snowbound Mine, Boulder County which was approved by the Colorado Review Board on December 2, 1988, (held in our office awaiting an accurate boundary description and additional photos) and the Multiple Property Documentation Form for the "Precious Metal Mining and Tourist Era Resources of Boulder County" and nine individual nominations:

|                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Eldora Historic District      | Little Church-in-the-Pines |
| Gold Hill Historic District   | Sunshine School            |
| Wallstreet Assay Office       | Ward Congregational Church |
| Jamestown Mercantile Building | Ward School                |
| Salina School                 |                            |

The nominations for Boulder County's mining related resources represent the first multiple property nomination attempted by Colorado on the new forms. The task was a great deal more work and took much more time than first envisioned. The project was underfunded and the consultant was

Carol Shull  
Page  
June 14, 1989

unable to complete the work. The Multiple Property Documentation Form and individual forms needed a great deal of editing and revision by our staff before and following the Colorado Review Board approval in December 1987. We now feel this nomination is ready for review by your staff.

Please refer any questions about these nominations to Barbara Norgren, our National Register Coordinator, at (303) 866-4681.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Barbara Sudler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'B'.

Barbara Sudler  
State Historic Preservation Officer

BS/BN: jc